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**EAST
ORANGE
COUNTY
WATER
DISTRICT**

September 20, 1999

Mr. Rick Breitenbach
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

DIRECTORS

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Subject: Comments on CALFED Draft EIS/EIR, dated June 1999

Dear Mr. Breitenbach:

The East Orange County Water District (District) is a wholesale water import agency formed in 1961 to provide for the distribution of imported water to over 100,000 customers in the north and eastern portions of Orange County and is a member agency of the Municipal Water District of Orange County.

The District has reviewed the June 1999 Draft Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) and the Program Plan Appendices incorporated therein and have identified a number of deficiencies that make the EIS/EIR inadequate. Specifically, the discussion of impacts identified in the appendices to the EIS/EIR fails to address potentially significant and indirect environmental impacts of the preferred alternative. The EIS/EIR fails to discuss alternative projects that could eliminate or substantially reduce the significant environmental impacts allowing mitigation measures which could be implemented to reduce the impacts and is therefore inadequate. The District believes that in order to deliver the best available water quality and supply to the public, the following commitments must be included in the CALFED plan and in the EIS/EIR.

The District believes CALFED should focus on the following objectives.

Initial Funding Assurances - The District believes a complete funding package for all projects should be proposed from the beginning. CALFED needs to ensure that statewide funding, including public and federal funding, will be provided for the environmental and recreational costs of the CALFED solution. The financing plan must demonstrate that Stage 1 and long-term actions provide beneficial value for those who will be asked to contribute financially. CALFED must develop a detailed funding package acceptable to all stakeholders including state and federal agencies.

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Public Health - CALFED should propose solutions to meet both current and future regulatory requirements using the latest technology available towards removing total organic compounds and reducing bromide levels. In combination with increasing drinking water standards, the preferred alternative would increase the cost and environmental impacts of treatment to meet drinking water standards. The EIS/EIR fails to discuss these impacts on drinking water or to discuss alternatives and mitigation measures towards eliminating or mitigating these impacts.

Groundwater Degradation - CALFED should propose solutions that will insure reduced dissolved salts in order to allow and encourage increased groundwater storage and therefore reducing high energy desalinization expenses. This would allow additional water supplies to be available for blending. A failure to decrease, or potentially increase, total dissolved solids in water exported from the Delta would most certainly have a detrimental impact on groundwater basins where such water is used for groundwater recharge. The EIS/EIR must address mitigation measures which may be feasible towards reducing or eliminating this potentially very significant impact on groundwater quality. Assurances must be made that the water quality requirements of Orange County will be met prior to costly new regulatory requirements going into effect.

Water Quality Impacts on Conservation and Recycling -The Water Quality Program Plan has the potential for lower quality water exported from the Delta. This could effect conservation and water recycling efforts in these areas importing water from the Bay-Delta. A reduction in recycled water supplies or an increase in the cost of recycled water will result in a higher demand for source water to replace these supplies, including overproduction from groundwater basins. CALFED needs to ensure the ability of local water providers to protect public health by meeting anticipated more stringent regulations on disaffection by-products and pathogens to protect public health either through water quality improvements in Delta water supplies, or through a cost effective combination of alternative source waters, source improvement, and treatment facilities. CALFED needs to ensure the delivery of a water quality that meets 150 milligrams per liter total dissolved solids in order to enhance recycling in Southern California, and to promote and expand existing conjunctive use programs.

Impact of Reduced Reliability - CALFED should seek the most reliable solution to a redundant transfer facility. A plan relying entirely on delivering water through the Delta is unacceptable in the long term. The June, 1999 draft EIS/EIR fails to address the environmental impacts due to the CALFED Program not meeting the water supply reliability needs of areas exporting water from the Delta. Additionally, groundwater quality will degrade, and groundwater conjunctive use programs will diminish, without an adequate supply of reliable water from the Delta.

Harvey O. Banks - Orange County needs a commitment that the Harvey O. Banks Pumping Plant will be permitted to operate at 8,500 cfs in the first two years of Stage 1 and, that this plants permitted capacity will be at 10,300 cfs by the end of Stage 1.

Preferred Alternative - It is not clear whether this commitment can be assured. CALFED must commit to this alternative resulting in the Metropolitan Water District of

Southern California receiving a minimum of 650,000 AF firm dry-year yield from the SWP by 2020.

Conveyance - CALFED must insure a peripheral or dual through-Delta conveyance system by construction of a new, isolated conveyance facility. This would allow a portion of the Delta outflow to be transported in the new canal; the rest would continue to flow through the estuary.

Because of political pressure, CALFED has sidestepped or delayed every decision to develop the new water storage and conveyance facilities that are required just to meet existing needs - let alone the needs of another 15 million Californians expected in the next 20 years. At a time when California's water supply and delivery system has suffered more than 20 years of neglect and decline, CALFED offers no credible commitment to invest in much-needed facilities to improve our water supply or water quality.

CALFED must incorporate commitments to Orange County to meet our water quality and water supply reliability needs as outlined above. In addition, CALFED must change their philosophy regarding water quality. It is unacceptable for Orange County to eventually receive degraded water from the Delta as a result of CALFED actions in Phase 1, before CALFED makes future decisions to begin actions that may or may not reverse this direction.

Sincerely,



Dale A. Heuerman
General Manager

Cc: EOCWD Board of Directors